

## ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT INDICES AND INFORMATION

### *Ecosystem Goal: Maintain Diversity*

#### Time trends in groundfish discards

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In 1998, the amount of managed groundfish species discarded in Federally-managed groundfish fisheries dropped to less than 10% of the total groundfish catch in both the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska (Figure 112). These decreases are explained by reductions in the discard rates of pollock and Pacific cod that resulted from regulations implemented in 1998 prohibiting discards of these two species. Discards in the Gulf of Alaska have increased somewhat since 1998 but are still lower than amounts observed in 1997, prior to the implementation of the improved retention regulations. Estimates of discards for 1994-2002 come from NMFS Alaska Region's blend data; estimates for 2003-04 come from the Alaska Region's new Catch Accounting System. It should be noted that although these sources provide the best available estimates of discards, the estimates are not necessarily accurate because they are based on visual observations by observers rather than data from direct sampling.

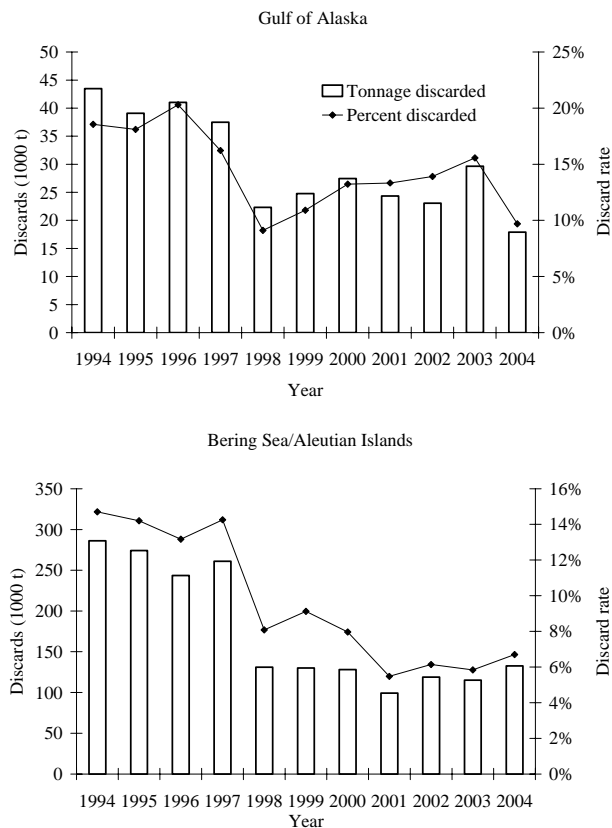


Figure 112. Total biomass and percent of total catch biomass of managed groundfish discarded in the GOA and BSAI areas 1994-2004. (Includes only catch counted against federal TACs).

